

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia: Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate a legacy of faith in Virginia's Third Congressional District. This year, First Baptist Church Denbigh in Newport News is celebrating its 150th anniversary, and I would like to take a moment to reflect on the history of this esteemed institution and its contributions to the greater Hampton Roads community.

The story of First Baptist Church Denbigh begins in July 1862 as the Civil War raged. A Recognizing Council was called to meet at the old Denbigh Baptist Church. They chose Rev. Peter Banks to lead the congregation. Rev. T. G. Wright became the second pastor, serving from 1863 to 1869. During his administration, the white community returned to claim their church building. Rev. Wright and congregation moved to the current location, building a small house of worship.

During the tenure of Rev. T. G. Nettles (1870-1881), a larger house was built to accommodate increased membership and the church was renamed to "First Baptist Church of Warwick County." Other ministers were Reverends Watt Talton (1882-1883), J. B. Whiting (1883-1887), Robert H. Nazareth (1887-1912), T. C. Williams (1912-13), A. A. Hudgins (1913-26), Isaac Daniel (1926-32), J. D. Atkins (1933-40), and Joseph H. Brown (1941-48), all of whom added to the church in both physical form and spiritual leadership. During this period, the church was renamed "First Baptist Church Denbigh."

For the next ten years, the church received sermons from Reverends B F. Burton and I. L. Buie along with other leaders. Later ministers were Reverends Samuel Fladger (1959-63), T. T. Brown (1963-67), and Albert L. Hill (1968-73), who initiated a bond sale to build a new air conditioned facility, with an indoor baptismal pool, which held its first services in 1972.

Rev. Herbert A. Hill, Jr. began his pastorate in 1974 and gave the church the strength to endure though a tragic fire in 1986 which destroyed the church edifice. For a time, services were held in schools and other places in the community. In 1987, Rev. Hill's tenure as pastor ended and associate pastors provided guidance to the flock.

In 1987, Edward Talton, a deacon for more than 40 years, was called into the ministry. Rev. Talton preached only two sermons from the pulpit before his death, but his life was a sermon in itself. In 1988, Rev. Haywood Barnes was voted to serve as interim pastor. Since 1988, Rev. Ivan T. Harris has led services, assuming the full-time pastorate in October 1991. Through Pastor Harris' efforts, the church's 25 year mortgage was burned on October 9, 1994--after only 6 1/2 years.

Over the years, the First Baptist community has continued to flourish. Successful fundraising has afforded the church handicap-accessible transportation, a new Church Bell, an Education Center, Child Development Center, Family Life Center, and modern technologies. In addition to Sunday prayers, the church offers Summer Bible School, The Bible Institute, and GED, Homebound and Short Term Suspension programs. It provides over 30 ministries and is home

to several choirs. The Church leads charitable causes including the The Hunt Food Locker, Food Mobile, Summer Feeding Program, an Outreach Center for women's transitional housing, a Clothes Closet, and the adoption of a low-income neighborhood.

Perhaps the most notable activity of the church is their African Village Adoption Project, initiated in 2005. Members have selected a native from Benin, Africa for adoption. The Church as a whole has provided a water well, microbanking program, motorcycles, books, a Christian School, and medical and worship facilities.

As First Baptist Church Denbigh gathers to celebrate this historic milestone, the church can truly remember its past, celebrate its present, and focus on its future. I would like to congratulate Pastor Harris and all of the 2,500 members of First Baptist Church Denbigh on the occasion of their 150th Anniversary. I wish them many more years of dedicated service to the community.